



News Release

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Immunization rates in Washington hold steady

More work to do to prevent disease

OLYMPIA — After increasing slightly last year, childhood immunization rates in Washington remained steady according to the latest Centers for Disease Control and Prevention National Immunization Survey. These rates show that Washington continues to keep kids vaccinated and maintain the gains made last year.

“Recent disease outbreaks in our state and around the country remind us how important childhood immunizations are,” said Secretary of Health Mary Selecky. “We’ve got more work to do to make sure kids in our state are protected against preventable diseases, all of which can be costly and have serious side effects.”

The 2009 National Immunization Survey shows that Washington is meeting the goal of 90 percent of young children being vaccinated against polio, measles, mumps, and rubella. This is the minimum level needed to help stop disease from spreading in our communities. Washington is below 90 percent for some diseases including whooping cough, hepatitis A, chickenpox, rotavirus, and pneumococcal vaccines. Whooping cough, rotavirus, and chickenpox still happen fairly frequently in our state. Hepatitis A vaccination increased 16 percent, from 36 to 52 percent. That’s higher than the national average of 46.6 percent. This helps protect the community because young children with hepatitis A usually don’t have symptoms but can still spread the disease.

The data also show that 64.9 percent of Washington children 19–35 months old have a complete vaccination series. The national average is 70.5 percent. These numbers are behind the state and national goal of 80 percent. The series of vaccines being measured changed from the 2008 survey, so it cannot be compared to past data. The series consists of six vaccines, some requiring multiple doses. A child must have all the doses to be included in the series rate as complete.

The state continues to promote the importance of fully vaccinating kids on time; missing or delaying even one vaccine leaves kids at risk. One of the ways the agency works to improve rates is by giving tools to health care providers, such as the CHILD Profile Immunization Registry. We also educate families in our state about the importance of making sure their kids are fully immunized.

“Immunization is one of the most important decisions parents can make to protect their child, their families, and their communities,” said Secretary Selecky. “We want to make sure families have accurate information about immunizations — that’s why we send them health information and work closely with health care providers to make sure parents have the most up-to-date information.”

All recommended vaccines for kids under 19 are provided at no cost through the state’s Childhood Vaccine Program supported in part by the Washington Vaccine Association. Health care providers may still charge an office visit or administration fee, but this can be waived if you’re unable to pay.

Parents are urged to go to their regular health care providers for childhood immunizations. For help finding a provider or an immunization clinic, call your [local health agency](#) (www.doh.wa.gov/LHJMap/LHJMap.htm) or the Family Health Hotline at 1-800-322-2588.

More information on childhood immunizations is on the Department of Health [immunization program website](#) (www.doh.wa.gov/cfh/Immunize). The [National Immunization Survey](#) (www.cdc.gov/nis/) is available from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

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Visit the Washington Department of Health website at http://www.doh.wa.gov for <i>a healthy dose of information</i> .
